

Family Circle.

DOMESTIC OR FAMILY MUSIC.

From Mainzer's "Music and Education"

All classes, at last, will reach that beautiful style, which, though scarcely known as yet, is that which gives to music its real character, its educational importance, the stamp of its lofty destiny—*Domestic or Family Music*. In a country where dramatic works have so long and so exclusively occupied the field, it is difficult to make it understood what family music is. In the expectation that this style of composition will soon find poets and musicians, we might mention as such, the smaller pieces of Handel and Mozart, the psalms of Marcello, or, should we name the work of a more modern master, those beautiful duets of Rinck, called in the English translation, "The Sabbath Eve!" In the character of these simple musical dialogues, of which the English poet has fortunately too much contracted the thought, is our idea of one kind of family music best personified. They have that sublime cast, that lofty tone and sentiment, which mark this kind of music as the most cheering, the most elevating. Who that once has been a witness of the magic charm thrown over a family, by the true and expressive interpretation of such simple compositions; who that has seen what a little paradise rises, as by enchantment, out of the few inspired strains of the poet musician, will ever forget what an endless ocean rolls its waves between the every-day compositions, and works such as we understand them, and as we would fain see them domesticated under every roof, at every fireside! The music we seek to implant in the soil and in the hearts of the people, is a music, the fruits of which render us wiser, better, and happier. Thibaut, the celebrated professor of Law in Heidelberg, in whose house the best compositions of the 16th and 17th centuries were performed, relates, in his musical work, *Ueber Reinheit der Tonkunst*, of a young man, who, after hearing a composition of Lotti, was so moved, that in leaving his house, he exclaimed, "Oh! this evening, I could do no harm to my greatest enemy." Why should not, in every family, when the day's busy stream is past, all unite harmoniously, and have one happy hour in the enjoyment of such works?

To attain all this, the means are simple. Vocal music must be acknowledged as an indispensable branch of instruction in every school. The young scholar must be made aware that he is learning something useful; as a renovating and exhilarating power, the music lesson must be placed between those studies which require more mental abstraction. There is no hope of seeing music and poetry resume their power in education, until teachers begin to understand that an hour devoted to their acquirement is not an hour lost, but an hour gained for school and church, for life and for society.

Another question now presents itself, that of the most suitable method of imparting to the young, the necessary musical elements. Nothing is more important, and it cannot be denied that one method is preferable to another, as being based upon simpler principles, and more in conformity with the juvenile capacities and juvenile understanding. But should it be made obligatory on the teacher? Supposing the system he wishes to follow is simple and easy, based upon the nature of the art to be learned, and the intelligence and the nature of the child who has to acquire it, and therefore perfectly well adapted for schools,—is he to be prevented from carrying it out? Should, because one method has become the law of the land, the world of thought and of inquiry be shut up to all future improvement and progress? Should all studies, all efforts, be thus declared useless and unavailable? No country has ever attempted such tyranny. Neither France nor Prussia, neither Saxony, Bavaria, nor Wurtemberg, have ever dared to put such drag shoes on human intelligence, the least of all on educational pursuits. School books are examined with care, and, above all, by men competent to judge; and when approved, they are recommended, but their exclusive use is never insisted upon. Numerous methods bear, therefore, in France the words, *approuvée et recommandée*, as motto of the minister of public instruction; so it is in Germany: hundreds of different methods are thus, at the same time in operation—here it is the one, there the other, which produces the better result, according to circumstances or the individuality of the teacher. Make the teacher answerable for the result, but leave to him the choice of the means. He knows best how to work, in order to reach the minds of infancy. His system may not be the best, yet he will imbue it with an element without which the most perfect method remains a dead letter, a closed, an unintelligible book—the fire of his heart, his enthusiasm.

If you really wish that music should lay hold of the young population, and penetrate into the very heart of the British islands, throw widely open the gates of instruction; surround yourself with a whole army of different systems! Efface the line of narrow demarcation, and let the stream of competition carry on its waves, life and animation, through the schools, into the people. Give some special encouragement to this so-neglected art, and some preference to the schoolmaster able to promote it.

Thus, when a competition is opened for meth-

ods and systems, as well as for practical and musical compositions, lofty in thought and beautiful in form, and in every respect fit to take a share in the education of the people; a new and important branch of composition will appear as by enchantment, and extend its influence and ramifications into every school, and every family, through the length and breadth of the land. The educational and family music, scarce known as yet by name, will, in the midst of an ocean, in all its various changes and tempests, stand in its simplicity, purity, and grandeur, like a rock and bear unshaken the sway of all the surrounding tides of style and fashion. May the classic, romantic, and fantastic schools, combat and efface each other! May the lyric drama of all the continental languages intoxicate the lions of the fashionable world! There will be a music which appears neither upon the stage nor the market place, neither in concerts nor drawing-rooms, but which modestly enlivens the school and the cottage, and helps to instruct the people, to embellish the hour of toil and that of rest. The style will remain uncontaminated by the impure breath of changing fashion and passing mountebanks; and as truly NATIONAL, form the axis round which all others move, appear and disappear, as figures of a *Laterna Magica*. In this manner you will render to the young what they have been deprived of; you will advance the rest of Europe, and give even to Prussia a glorious example of a better, a more philosophical application of music to the education of youth.

Thus Music will again be looked at with reverence. In churches she will fill, like a stream, the hearts of the multitude; she will again appear as the minstrel and the harp of old in our dwelling; be our guardian angel, a heavenly messenger, our teacher, friend, and comforter; and from her deep dejection, from a state of servitude, corruption, and degeneracy rise, a new phoenix out of ashes, higher and higher, to a glorious apotheosis.

THE FIRST SIBERIAN WHO LOVED JESUS.

For many years the good Missionaries in Siberia were teaching and preaching, and working and praying, without seeing one good seed spring in the hearts of the people. It seemed just as when we throw seed into the sand, where it will not grow, because there is nothing there to nourish it. Their hearts were hard and cold. They would not love Jesus. This made the Missionaries very sad, but still they hoped; for they knew that God had sent them, and that He could soften these hard natures. The hope that cheered and gladdened their hearts was this, that, as the ruffled lake, when it becomes calm and smooth, reflects the soft blue sky, so God could change and sanctify the hearts of these heathen, so as to make them love Christ and resemble him. And in this they were not disappointed.

One day, a thoughtful boy of about fifteen years of age, who lived nearly a hundred miles away from the Missionaries, heard that there was a school kept by the white-faced English, where Buriat children were taught to read and write, and were made wise; and he longed to be among them. But how was he to get there? It was so far off! and he had only a mother, whom he loved dearly; for his father was dead and he had no brothers or sisters. He could not tell how to leave his mother, or who would help her with the cattle, and bring back the horse, if he went away. Still he thought of it every day, and wished more and more to learn and become wise. At last, he told his mother his thoughts; but she could not bear to part with him, and she made many objections to his plans. One morning however, he heard the quick trampling of a horse on the crisp white snow and, on looking out of the tent, he saw uncle coming to his home on horseback. Oh, how glad he felt! It was the uncle who had told him of the English school, and he did not live far from it. The boy soon let his uncle know how much he wished to learn; and, when his uncle said he would take him if his mother would let him go, his joy was very great. A few days after this, Barnu was seen on horseback, travelling towards the house of the Missionary. He was, of course, received into the school, and he at once began his difficult lessons with great diligence. Soon he could read and write and cipher. Many other boys, indeed, could do that; but he did something more, which many children do not care for, he thought about what he had learned, and most of all about the new truths he had heard there. Every morning at nine o'clock, when the piece of iron was struck to let the people know that it was the time for prayer, Barnu was seen in his place, with his Testament on his knee, and with a very thoughtful face, hearkening to all he heard. And God blessed the attention he thus gave. He felt that he was a sinner,—that he wanted a Saviour,—that Jesus seemed just such a Saviour as he wanted; so holy, and lovely, and just, and yet so tender to the failings of men; so great, yet so freely meeting and talking with the ignorant and the poor, the old and the young. By such thoughts Barnu's heart was touched, and drawn to Christ in love. He often wept as he read of what Jesus had said and suffered. Dear children, do you not feel how great that love is? Do you not wish to be better than you are? Oh, do not let that desire pass away like a cloud, and leave nothing

behind! Ask God to help you to ripen that wish into a *resolution*,—into a *real attempt to be His*. Barnu did so, and God helped him. The other boys could not understand him. He often went up into a loft quite alone, and remained there some time. It was there he used to pray, and when the others were at play, he loved reading about Christ. Ah! this showed where his heart was. Christ said, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Geographic and Historic.

THE BRITISH HOUSE OF COMMONS.

The Lower House of Parliament consists of 658 members—500 English, 53 Scotch and 105 Irish. The body, as its name implies, purports to be the representation of the "commonality" of the realm, but yet the aristocratic element enters largely into its composition. It contains 39 elder sons of Peers, who upon the death of their fathers will step into the Upper House, 170 brothers, younger sons and immediate relatives of Peers, and 167 other members, who by birth or marriage are connected with the nobility.—The Superbundance of placement in the representative branch, which our constitution so wisely guards against, and which was one of the principal causes of the late revolution in France, exists to a grievous extent in the British Commons. The body contains 63 government officials drawing large annual salaries, 56 generals and colonels, 84 military officers of a lower grade, 8 lieutenants, 74 deputy and vice lieutenants, 53 magistrates, and 106 patrons of church livings, who are all more or less interested in the preservation of present abuses.

It has long been the theory of the British constitution that every citizen in the kingdom was present, either himself or by proxy, in the House of Commons, but the reconciliation of theory with the actual system of representation is enough to baffle any ingenuity. The famous Reform Bill of 1832 abolished some rotten boroughs, and somewhat enlarged the area of representation, but yet the evils of the old electoral law were not removed, nor in fact materially ameliorated. The elective franchise still remains most unjustly limited. Only those who have a freehold, the annual value of which is forty shillings, and those who pay ten pounds house rent annually, are privileged to vote; and, in consequence, not one million out of the twenty-eight millions of the United Kingdom, can exercise the dearest right of freedom. In England only one out of seventy male adults have the legal right to vote; in Scotland only one out of eleven, and in Ireland only one in seventeen.

But the present electoral law is not only very limited in its range; it is also extremely unequal in its application. It not only most unjustly refuses votes, but it most unreasonably denies all equality of value to the votes it actually gives. A vote in one constituency may be worth twenty, thirty, and even fifty times as much as a vote in another. One sixth of the whole number of electors, and less than one fortieth of the adult male population, have the power of electing a majority of the House of Commons. The law in its apportionment of members pays little regard to the sum total of population to the number of electors, to the amount of wealth, to the extent of territory, to the degree of intelligence, or to any other standard whatever. It appears to resolutely set all all principles of justice or political philosophy at defiance. The immensely wealthy city of Liverpool, with a population of 282,656, of whom 15,559, are electors, returns two members just the same number as the miserable little borough of Harwich, with a population of 3,780 and with 233 electors. Manchester, with a population of 240,000 and with 1,200,000 pounds rateable property, sends two members to Parliament, while Buckinghamshire, with a population of 17,000 and 760,000 pounds of rateable property sends 11. Kensington, a district containing 14 square miles, with a population of 11,000, and 18,345 qualified voters, has not been thought worthy of a single member, while the petty boroughs of Calane, Dartmouth, and Medhurst with a voting population under 300, have one member each, and Thetford, which has not 200 voters has two members. In fact, all the great towns and cities of the kingdom, the centres of wealth, enterprise, and intelligence, are virtually disfranchised, their voice being completely swallowed up by a multitude of little boroughs, which have comparatively no claims whatever upon the national consideration.—There are no less than thirty-five electorates, which send one or two members each, although each has less than 300 voters. One half of the House are elected by towns, with less than 10,000 inhabitants. Eight particular boroughs, with an united population of 32,516 have the same number of representatives as London, with its population of a million and a half. The five cities, London, Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, and Leeds, send, in all, twenty-four members, while a certain number of counties and boroughs, with the same population, send one hundred and forty-two. Thirty-one English boroughs, with a united constituency of 9,682, return to Parliament as many members as all Scotland; and seventy English boroughs, containing 26,443 electors, return as many as all Ireland. As gross an inequality exists among the different Scotch and Irish constituencies, as among the English.

By the present system, the aristocracy have potentially a controlling voice in the composition of the Lower House. By virtue of that clause of the Reform Bill which denies the suffrage to tenants at will, the 249 county constituencies, are subjected to the entire control of the landlords. The 69 members of those boroughs which are mere appendages of aristocratic houses, and the six University members who are always appointed by the nobility, to make up the number of "national representatives," dependant on the peerage, to 324, are less, than the majority of the House. But this deficiency can be supplied twenty times over, if necessary, from among the 160 other seats, which the landlords always successfully contest. The actual extent of aristocratic influence, in the so-called popular branch of the legislature, is not then a matter of wonder.—*Cor. N. Y. Courier.*

THE POLAR REGIONS.

Many remarkable effects of cold are related in the journals of Polar navigators. Captain James, when wintering in Hudson's Bay, lat. 52 deg. N. experienced such cold, that on the 10th of December, many of the sailors had their noses, cheeks, and fingers, frozen as white as paper. Ellis, who wintered in the same region, latitude 57 deg. 30 min. found by the third of Nov. bottled beer, though wrapped in tow, and placed near a good, constant fire, frozen solid. Many of the sailors had their faces, ears, and toes frozen; iron adhered to their fingers, glasses used in drinking stuck to the mouth, and sometimes removed the skin from the lips or tongue; and a sailor, who inadvertently used his finger for stopping a spirit-bottle, in place of a cork, while removing it from the house to his tent, had his finger fast frozen in the bottle, in consequence of which a part of it was obliged to be taken off to prevent mortification. Again:—"The ice and hoar frost," says Eggede, "reach through the chimney to the stove's mouth without being thawed by the fire in the day time. Over the chimney is an arch of frost with little holes, through which the smoke discharges itself. The doors and walls are as if they were plastered over with frost, and which is scarcely credible, beds are often frozen to the bedsteads. The linen is frozen in the drawers; the upper eiderdown bed and the pillows are quite stiff with frost an inch thick, from the breath."— *Scoresby's Arctic Regions.*

THE EMPEROR OF RUSSIA.

One cold, bitter winter's night a sledge, containing two travellers, drove up to the gates of the Kremlin, which the taller of the two, in a voice of authority, desired to be immediately opened. To this demand a very short but expressive negative monosyllable was returned—*sentries being, of all animals in the world, the most averse to any description of correspondence, whether colloquial or epistolary.* The two strangers began to manifest symptoms of evident impatience at a rejoinder, to them at least of so unsatisfactory a nature; and the one who had previously spoken again hailed the imperturbable grenadier, and proclaiming himself a general officer, desired him to comply with his mandate. "If you are, as you declare yourself a general, you ought to be aware of the first duty of a soldier—obedience to his orders," was the firm and determined reply, as the soldier resumed the measured tread of his march, which the above dialogue had momentarily interrupted. This was a poser; so finding further argument unavailing, the travellers at last begged the sentry would exert his voice, and call up the officer of the guard. To this the man made no objection; and after a tolerable expenditure of shouting and bawling, the guard-room being some twenty yards distant, a sleepy non-commissioned officer emerged from the building, and learning the rank and wishes of the strangers, begged them to walk at once into the apartment of his commanding officer, until measures could be taken for a compliance with their desires. At the first sound of the taller stranger's voice, the young subaltern, bounding like a shot from the couch on which he reclined, stood in an attitude of subdued and respectful attention before him, requested to know his pleasure. The traveller smiled, and merely desired him to relieve and bring into his presence the sentry at the gate. This was done quickly, and the man entered the room at the very moment the stranger cast aside the travelling cloak which encircled him. There was no mistaking that noble, that majestic figure—that broad, commanding, and magnificent brow, on which a momentary expression of impatience had given way to one of humor and benevolence. Erect as a poplar, the soldier stood before his sovereign, in a desperate quandary at thus discovering who was the person he had so cavalierly repulsed, and yet with a something like consciousness that, in so doing, he had only strictly acted up to his duty. He had no time, however, to fear, as the emperor, calling upon him to advance, commended his conduct in the warmest terms, ordered the sum of a hundred silver roubles (about £40) to be paid him, and with his own hand wrote a letter to his commanding officer, desiring his immediate promotion to the rank of sergeant, a requisition which of course, it is almost needless to observe, was promptly complied with.—*Cameron's Adventures in Russia.*